

# Strategy Research Project

## Expeditionary Theater Opening Strategy

by

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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## **Abstract**

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The United States ability to remain a dominant global power relies on its capability to deploy, sustain, and redeploy its military forces. The increasing effects from globalization have challenged the U.S. strategy to maintain domestic security and international order. With the increased competition to access the global lines of communications, the U.S. may no longer enjoy the freedom to unilaterally deploy forces around the world. The challenge to the Joint force is the process of introducing a force into a theater of operations. The United States inability to respond to a short notice crisis could hinder the Combatant Commander's ability to effectively use military force to meet U.S. national ends. To mitigate this challenge, the DoD must develop an integrated strategic mobility strategy to extend the reach of U.S. forces from the port of embarkation into the theater interior lines of communication.





## **Expeditionary Theater Opening Strategy**

On October 7, 2001 the United States launched a military assault on Afghanistan in retaliation for the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, and the Pentagon in Washington DC. The U.S. military targeted al Qaeda terrorist training camps and military installations hosted by the Taliban regime in northern Afghanistan. President George W. Bush declared, "This military action is a part of our campaign against terrorism, another front in a war that has already been joined through diplomacy, intelligence, the freezing of financial assets and the arrests of known terrorists by law enforcement agents in 38 countries."<sup>1</sup> When President George W. Bush announced the start of Operation Enduring Freedom against the Taliban regime and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, it was a sign to the world that U.S. international interests would be protected by projecting U.S. military force abroad. Eighteen months later, the United States again committed its military force by initiating Operation Iraqi Freedom with the invasion of Iraq.

As a global power with interests that reach across the world, the United States must maintain a credible capability to project military forces into any location in which U.S. interests are threatened.<sup>2</sup> Since the end of World War II, the U.S. has positioned its military forces throughout the world as part of a national security strategy of sustaining U.S. global leadership. For the U.S., implementing this national security strategy has required participating in overseas contingency operations (OCO), ranging from unilateral U.S. military action to U.S. led coalition engagements in critical locations throughout the world.

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in 2002, Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, and the 2005 earthquakes in Pakistan, tested the military's deliberate process for initial

entry into a port of debarkation. Ad hoc command and control, lack of continuous visibility of in and outbound cargo, and the inability to respond to a short notice crisis have hindered the Defense Department's Combatant Commander's ability to effectively use military force to meet U.S. national ends. Resolving the persistent issues that surround opening a theater requires a deliberate Joint solution to bridge the gaps found when combining individual efforts from the armed services.

The Defense Department's capability to project military force is an essential means of executing the National Security Strategy. Operations of the last quarter century have shaped our military's force design and doctrine to narrowly concentrate on conventional operations. This analysis looks at the operational and logistical challenges for the Joint force when deploying and sustaining our armed forces over long lines of communication. Additionally, it focuses on the challenges the Joint force faces in defining its current and future roles and responsibilities in the Joint Intergovernmental Interagency Multinational (JIIM) environment. Finally, it offers recommendations of emerging Joint deployment concepts that will enable the Joint force to carry out its expanding roles for the Joint force and provide alternate solutions for better uses of the force's current capabilities.

### Supporting National Security Strategy

The 2010 National Military Strategy (NSS) highlighted a rising concern from the U.S. national leadership on the increasing effects of globalization on the United States interests to maintain domestic security and international order. The NSS advocates a whole-of-government approach to create an environment that promotes U.S. interests. The complex global environment has created some urgency to unify efforts throughout the U.S. diplomatic, economic, information, and military elements of power. U.S.

financial institutions and other economic instruments are essential components of the nation's prosperity and international influence. Maintaining a resilient economy depends considerably on our ability to sell U.S. exports to overseas markets, and retain access to worldwide resources and scarce commodities.<sup>3</sup> Any threat to deny U.S. access to the global economy is a direct threat to the American way of life. For the military, the Department of Defense (DoD) has been assigned a supporting role to strengthen the nation's economic and diplomatic efforts to preserve U.S. international influence. The NSS tasked the DoD to maintain a superior conventional force that is capable of securing U.S. access to the international global commons. To accomplish this mission, the U.S. force must maintain superiority across the military domains and remain agile enough to defeat any conventional or asymmetric threats that threaten U.S. access to international trade routes.<sup>4</sup>

To counter an adversary's efforts to restrict U.S. freedom of access, the U.S. military must be able to deter and defeat aggression in anti-access environments:<sup>5</sup> "The United States must maintain its ability to project power in areas where access and freedom to operate are challenged."<sup>6</sup> An increasing number of developed states have acquired sophisticated weapons systems and devised strategies that could influence the U.S. capability to respond to a regional crisis. We may no longer enjoy the freedom to unilaterally deploy U.S. forces around the world, as we did in executing Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. If the U.S. does not possess a dominant capability to project power, the basis of U.S. influence abroad is in question.<sup>7</sup> DoD's capacity to deploy, sustain, and redeploy its forces throughout the world is an essential for assuring that this nation remains a dominant global military power.

## Strategic Mobility Strategy

One of the challenges in developing a force projection strategy is that the proposed air, sea, and enabling forces must be agile enough to support our forces employed throughout the world today while simultaneously supporting our future requirements. For decades, the U.S. military forces have been designed for rapid projection and arrayed to respond to a crisis. During the Cold War period, America's principal adversaries were the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The U.S. military with their allies developed war plans, force posture, and defense capabilities to respond to those known threats.

After the collapse of the USSR, America found itself as the only enduring military superpower with no peer competitors on the horizon. At that juncture, the U.S. military adopted a contingency-based strategy to protect the homeland and uphold its defense agreements with its allies. The first large scale test of this strategy was in reaction to the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Operation Desert Storm (ODS) revealed that the U.S. possessed a sufficient quantity of required aircraft, ships, and crews available to shuttle personnel and equipment back and forth during the long two-month force buildup. If there was a necessity to support an additional major regional contingency (MRC), no U.S. sealift or aircraft was available.<sup>8</sup>

Post-Persian Gulf War defense strategy called for the U.S. military to base its conventional force structure and material demands on competencies based on an ability to participate in two - nearly simultaneous Major Regional Contingency (MRC) actions. At that time, the mobility strategy was to move heavy, over and outsized equipment by sealift while flying personnel to a forward staging point via U.S. Air Force or Civil

Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) program aircraft. Initial combat equipment and sustainment would be drawn, if it were available from forward positioned stocks. The scope of the 1992 Mobility Requirements Study and again in the 1995 Mobility Requirements Study Bottom-Up Review reinforced the process by focusing on inter-theater movement of conventional forces by sea for the rest of the decade.<sup>9</sup> Because of the lessons learned from ODS, the U.S. realized the need for a rapidly deployable force.

For the United States military to meet its strategic mobility objectives in support of the National Military Strategy, it has largely depended on its strategic mobility capability. Our military's unique advantage over any other nation is our ability to project and sustain our forces throughout the world. The first and predominant approach to meet that advantage has been documented in decades of mobility studies with a continual question of supply and demand.

The mobility strategy for the U.S. is a mix of air, sea, and prepositioned assets sufficiently capable to meet the requirements of the Joint Force. At the turn of the century, the DoD began to recognize the undesirable effects on its force projection strategy from the reduction of overseas bases and the dramatic force structure changes. The September 2000 Mobility Requirements Study (MRS-05) emphasized the necessity to use strategic airlift assets to rapidly close conventional forces into a regional crisis. However, only with the start of the Global War on Terrorism did the DoD acknowledge that a Cold War, conventionally based deployment process would be incapable of responding to the demands of a changing strategic environment. The last DoD mobility capability study was released in 2005. The Mobility Capabilities and Requirements Study 2016 (MCRS-16) stated that the current mobility force structure

meets the demands of two near-simultaneous conventional contingencies.<sup>10</sup> It appears the latest mobility study is based on principles of a former era gone by. The nation's leaders seemed resigned to a status-quo mobility strategy: maintain the strategic airlift fleet at current levels, recapitalize the airlift, sealift and prepositioned assets that concentrate all efforts on the current fight in Afghanistan.<sup>11</sup>

#### Lack of End to End Mobility Strategy

Reliance on projected military power is expected to broaden over the next two decades. However, planners have no identified adversary to focus on, and further the joint force requirement to prepare to respond to a full range of regional threats has complicated efforts to design a comprehensive end-to-end deployment and distribution strategy. The method for deploying U.S. forces from the United States from multiple force projection platforms, or from a forward location within one of the regional commands remains the dominate theme.

#### United States Transportation Command

As DoD process owner for Deployment and Distribution Operations (DPO), United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) directs and manages the U.S. national strategic mobility air, sea, surface and enabling forces within the guidelines of Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise (JDDE). The JDDE ensures the correct capacity, control, and assurance that the right force will arrive when and where forces are needed. The capability to deploy its forces and equipment globally comes from a unified effort of air, sea and land forces within each of the military services. As a functional Combatant Command, USTRANSCOM's core mission during war and peace is to maintain the Defense Department's capability to deploy U.S. military forces throughout the world.

### Air Mobility Command

The airlift component within the triad is the United States Air Force Air Mobility Command (AMC). Air mobility is the system that networks the airlift, airdrop, aeromedical evacuation, aerial refueling, and air mobility support assets that support the air movement of personnel and material in between theaters of operation.<sup>12</sup> Inter-theater Airlift is the capability to move between multiple theaters using a combination of U.S. military aircraft, domestic and international Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) airlift commercial carriers. This strategic airlift capability provides the U.S. unmatched capacity to rapidly air transport personnel and carry outsized cargo over a great distance.<sup>13</sup>

### Military Sealift Command

The Military Sealift Command (MSC) is the U.S. Navy component responsible for managing the common-user sealift assets within the strategic mobility triad. U.S. maritime shipping resources are separated into three strategic transoceanic sealift shipping categories: United States Government (USG) assets, United States flag carriers, and foreign flag assets.<sup>14</sup> MSC consists a variety of non-combatant, civilian-crewed Fast Sea Ships (FSS), Large, Medium Speed Roll-on/Roll-off ships (LMSR) and pre-positioned ships. Added to the U.S. Navy inventory beginning in the 1980s, these ships enhanced the U.S. capacity to move the equivalent of a U.S. Army Mechanized Division.<sup>15</sup> Developed in the late 1990's, the U.S. government-owned LMSR roll-on/roll-off (RO/RO) ships are capable of carrying over 150,000 square feet equipment for the U.S. Army. The LMSR has expanded the U.S. sealift capability and has been the prime mover of oversized U.S. Forces equipment in Iraq and Afghanistan. Built from newly constructed and converted container ships, the fleet provided surge sealift support

capable of being loaded within four days of activation and they are the prepositioning platforms of U.S. Army material strategically located around the world.<sup>16</sup>

#### Surface Deployment and Distribution Command

The Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC) is the Army Service Component Command (ASCC) assigned to USTRANSCOM as the single port manager (SPM) for the DoD, and surface distribution contracted by USTRANSCOM. SDDC maintains a structure centered on military and commercial seaport operations, and the management movement of freight from CONUS to established theater ports worldwide. As the SPM, SDDC is responsible for the seaport interface that connects into the theater distribution plan.<sup>17</sup> The regional SDDC elements work closely with the regional Combatant Command (CCMD) to provide management of all seaport operations to include the coordination of workload requirements, port security and port support activities.

#### Prepositioning

The DoD prepositioning program has played a critical role in supporting our force in recent operations. As the military continues to drawdown its forces in Europe and reduce troop strength in Afghanistan, redefining the role of forward positioning of material will grow in importance. As the United States rebalances its strategy to focus on the Asian Pacific region and continue to stabilize the Middle East, prepositioned materiel and equipment will continue to play a critical role in achieving success in future operations and shaping U.S. overall defense strategy.<sup>18</sup>

The Prepositioning Program has seabased and landbased components designed to reduce closure time of combat and sustainment forces in the early stages of deployment operations. The prepositioning provides rapid availability of military



equipment and sustainment for the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, and Defense Logistics Agency operations in key locations worldwide. The afloat prepositioning force consists of a combination of prepositioned ships that includes U.S. government owned, ships from the Maritime Administration's Ready Reserve Force, and chartered U.S. flag carriers.

The U.S. Army Power Projection Program (AP3) was developed to provide combat, combat service; combat service support and sustainment to support U.S. Army combat units' initial buildup at potential contingency areas. AP3 is designed to achieve a balanced synchronized fort-to-foxhole capability that attempts to reduce the reliance on traditional sea and air ports of debarkation that are vulnerable from state and non-state belligerent sponsored anti-access area denial measures. AP3 provides the U.S. Army with the capability to project a lethal tailored force package from the continental United States and to sustain those forces anywhere in the world.<sup>19</sup> The AP3 concept directs at-sea positioning of enough tracked and wheeled vehicles to complement a Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT), two armor battalions, and two mechanized battalions along with combat support and combat service support equipment. In addition to the Navy's existing capability, the DoD has increased their use of commercial maritime shipping.

Do we have enough inventories of strategic mobility assets within the mobility triad to meet the demand? The question of supply and demand is suitable as long as the demand, volume, distance, and velocity remain consistent. However, what if the scope of the problem is not correct or at least not broad enough to meet realistic future demands. Has the environment, internally within our military, or externally with

domestic international policy makers, changed enough to bring into question the viability of today's "Fort to Port" scope to deploy the U.S. forces?

### The Tyranny Of Distance

U.S. overseas defense posture has changed in recent years. There has been a marked decrease in supporting a large contingent of overseas U.S. bases and distribution networks from both domestic and international policy makers has challenged the U.S. strategy to maintain freedom of movement throughout the world. With an increase of globalization, there is a growing competition for access to and influence over the global lines of communication. International influence from growing economic and political powers could make other developing states unable or unwilling to afford the United States the long-term commitment to basing rights it enjoyed for many decades.

Domestically, the U.S. appetite for maintaining forces abroad has diminished. In an era of decreasing military budgets, the willingness to continue funding the high cost of maintaining and protecting military garrisons across the globe is questionable.<sup>20</sup> Gaining and maintaining global access are two dependent tasks. First is the difficult logistics task of maintaining extended lines of communications. Second is the operational task of overcoming anti-access area denial measures.<sup>21</sup>

Supporting our forces over long lines of communications has been part of the U.S. forces requirements throughout our history. The Department of Defense developed the 2010 Capstone Concept for Joint Operations in order to "Maintain the capability to project and sustain military power over global distances".<sup>22</sup> The 1991 deployment of U.S. and Coalition forces to the Persian Gulf, and in the most recent overseas contingency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrated the U.S. focus on mastering military global reach. Traditionally, the U.S. primary method to mitigate the

degrading effect of operating over a long distance has been forward basing.

Maintaining some capacity to amass military capability in a forward location can mitigate the effects of extended distance. Both permanent and long term forward basing can promote capacity building with our allies and deterrence from our adversaries. But, forward basing is often seen as a resource intense activity that requires oversight, maintenance and protection. The sustainment and protection requirements can become politically divisive creating a liability to the host nation or neighbors within the region.<sup>23</sup>

In future operations, U.S. must maintain a mix of air and surface strategic capabilities that are not dependent on dedicated airfields and seaports. In some operating environments, operations will occur from austere locations that do not have the luxury of modern infrastructure. Alternatively, if it is an operational advantage, Joint force planners may choose an alternative approach heading to the objective without a developed access point even if modern infrastructure exists. To remain capable of operating under austere conditions it is a clear advantage for deploying forces to have the flexibility to operate outside of established ports and airfield.<sup>24</sup> They must be able to rapidly build or emplace expeditionary infrastructure that supports their activities in an austere environment.<sup>25</sup>

### Theater Opening

One of the challenges for the Joint force has been the process of introducing a force into a theater of operation. Supported Combatant Commanders (CCDR) need a reliable rapidly deployable force to manage the initial stages of forces and sustainment entering into or through the theater. Conducting effective theater opening operations requires a seamless transition from the strategic movement into the tactical level of

operations by integrating efforts from Joint enabling commands such as USTRANSCOM and the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) through the Regional CCDRs. USTRANSCOM, under the guidelines and authorities as the process owner for all governmental and DoD transportation, has the responsibility to oversee the overall DoD-wide effectiveness, efficiencies and alignment of force projections operations.<sup>26</sup> As the functional command, USTRANSCOM has developed a Joint capability to close the many rapid port opening gaps.

The Expeditionary Theater Opening (ETO) concept formed the Joint Task Force Port Opening (JTF-PO) designed to provide the Geographic CCDRs a rapidly deployable force, flexible in employment throughout a full spectrum of military activities. The Jointly trained, air and sea port command and control elements effectively addresses many of the issues that hinder regional CCMD and Joint force headquarters ability to manage the flow of forces being introduced into a theater of operation. The JTF-PO concept was to eliminate the following capability gaps in rapidly opening a port of debarkation.<sup>27</sup>

1. Ad hoc command and control (C2) of deployment and distribution operations at the POD.
2. Limited ability to establish a theater distribution network.
3. Limited capability to provide movement control at the POD.
4. Inability to coordinate onward movement from the POD.
5. Lack of intransit visibility of material and forces transiting through the POD.

While individual JTF-PO capabilities already existed within the service components, the methodology of a pre-designated, trained and ready force can mitigate

many of the shortcomings that occurred at the aerial and seaports in the past. The true value of an on-call, pre-configured deployable element under the control of USTRANSCOM has the capability arrive ahead of the Time Phased Force Deployment Data (TPFDD) forces.

The JTF-PO APOD for aerial ports of debarkation has Air Force Contingency Response forces and Army port clearance forces that work together to open and operate an aerial port in less than 72 hours of arrival. Consistent with the aerial port, the Sea Port of Debarkation Rapid Port Opening element has Army and Navy Terminal Control and port clearance forces to quickly open and operate a seaport logistics operation. These forces deploy preconfigured with modern communications equipment, transportation movement control systems, cargo handling equipment, and intransit visibility systems (ITV) that enable the conduit between the strategic delivery and theater line of communication.<sup>28</sup>

Although JTF-PO is a great step towards integrating service specific “stove-piped” enablers, there remains historic and emerging issues for the deploying force. The use of Defense Department capability in support of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) operations has grown exponentially. Since 1990, over 75 percent of operations that required immediate response from strategic mobility forces were non-combat related.<sup>29</sup> HA/DR are time critical and politically sensitive missions that rely on our mobility forces to immediately respond. Military "soft power" has emerged as an essential part of our international engagement strategy and part of the U.S. National Security priorities to promote core American values.

## Joint Reception Staging Onward Movement And Integration

As time sensitive, no notice missions take on a greater portion of the military's attention. The challenge for Joint planners and Logisticians is the reduction of time it takes to employ military capability to achieve the greatest effect. The difference between a Regional Joint Force Commander's successful or failed response to a dynamic asymmetric crisis is directly related to the employment of the right military capability at the right time and in the location.

One of the most challenging but essential operational tasks is the transition of arrival personnel and material into a force capable to meet operational requirements. The Joint Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration (JRSOI) process is difficult to perform, and when things go wrong, most often extremely difficult to overcome. Operational and logistics planners must pay particular attention to the detailed planning requirements that are required for managing each of the services roles within the overall process. JRSOI foundation is characterized by three overarching pillars; unity of command, synchronization of deploying forces, and the balance of managing the flow of forces into the theater.<sup>30</sup> No Defense Department Service component individually owns the entire process. As a result, effects from working across the gaps between the services makes integrating the effort extremely difficult.

It is the responsibility, under the authorities provided by Title 10 of the United States Code (10USC) for the Regional CDR to plan, execute and sustain the forces moving into the regional CDR's Area of Responsibility (AOR). The 10USC enables the CDR to exercise command over assigned forces within the CCMD. The CCMD headquarters, with its robust staff and regional expertise of the AOR has the capabilities to command and control forces deploying into the Theater of Operation. Logistically, the

Combatant Commander (CCDR) exercises a Direct Authority for Logistics (DAFL) in order to synchronize various support functions provided from the services to execute the phases of JRSOI.<sup>31</sup>

#### Command, Control, Oversight

Within the CCMD, the Directorate of Logistics (J4) is the primary staff that is responsible for all logistics policy and oversight within the Theater. The CCMD J4 maintains theater control and oversight through associated boards, bureaus, cells and working groups that monitor various Joint and service information systems to work in partnership with the services and assigned Joint Task Forces. The Joint Logistics Operation Center (JLOC) manages logistics functions through the direct coordination with other logistics commands and agencies for day-to-day activities to accomplish other management tasks. The Joint Deployment and Distribution Operations Center (JDDOC), not required, but can normally be found within the J4. The JDDOC is the CCMD's primary element that coordinates, synchronizes, and optimizes the inter-theater to intra-theater transportation operations within the theater areas of responsibility.<sup>32</sup>

Much of the functional expertise associated with JRSOI operations; synchronizing deploying forces, and managing the flow of forces into the theater is accomplished by the CCDR's staff and associated key stakeholders. In recent years, the CCMDs have had an increased reliance on common-user logistics (CUL) support and cross-Service support agreements in order to link service specific capabilities to JRSOI and theater distribution.<sup>33</sup> Conceptually, use of CUL can provide the Theater with a series of independent logistics functions integrated under a single theater logistics management system. The practice of incorporating service specific "stove-pipe" functions provides an integrated solution. Joint Theater Logistics Management (JTLM)

doctrine is more descriptive than proscriptive to the service components. The CCCR does not have a single logistics manager to lead the single theater logistics management system. Unlike the CCMD's subordinate service component commands, the CCCR lacks a dedicated Joint logistic headquarters to provide unity of command supporting JRSOI logistics requirements. The CCCR must direct one of the service components to fill the role as the lead service unifying command efforts in the Theater.

Typically, the ASCC that is responsible to provide oversight and control of land forces to the GCCs is often directed by the CCCR as the lead service for theater logistics. No other service component is organically capable to provide inland distribution from the Port of Debarkation, air or sea, to point of employment. The ASCC's robust operational headquarters and large logistics organizations are capable of providing most of the functional logistics support to the joint and/or combined forces across the theater.

#### Theater Sustainment Command Responsibilities

The Theater Sustainment Command (TSC) is the organization that sets the conditions for follow on operations by integrating the logistics capabilities of the land force.<sup>34</sup> A TSC or forward positioned subordinate Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC) is the largest echelons-above-brigade (EAB) logistics headquarters assigned to the ASCC. The TSC or ESC's core competency is to provide command and control, logistics planning, operational sustainment to land forces, and other Title 10 USC logistics and Army Support to Other Services (ASOS) within the theater. One of the critical differences between the TSC and the ESC is the scale and scope of the organizations. They are, in most CCMDs, structured according to the same organizational design. However, the ESC is half the size of the TSC force structure.



While the TSC scope is focused on supporting the ASCC and Joint force, the ESC's focus is on the JOA.<sup>35</sup>

It is important for Joint force planners to understand the structure limitations of TSC and ESC organizations. TSC/ESC headquarters can plan for and provide oversight of most theater logistics operational requirements. In theater-opening operations, a subordinate logistics headquarters will be assigned to sustain the early entry and establish the area of operational logistics bases. Most often, a Sustainment Brigade will be assigned to perform theater-opening operations as forces flow through reception, staging, and onward movement until their TSC or ESC has integrated into an operational force.

If operations permit, the TSC/ESC assigns the Sustainment Brigade (SB) to be the only operational command and control logistics headquarters responsible to logistically support the Regional or Joint Force Commanders within the operating area. The original design of the Sustainment Brigade was to be capable of conducting sustainment, theater distribution (TD), and theater opening. The designers viewed the logistics opening, sustainment and distribution functions to be closely related. Throughout the lifespan of a given operation, the SB was expected to perform many of these functions simultaneously. However, what the force developers failed to build into the command were the internal staff competencies needed for functional Theater Opening or Distribution operations.

The SB's organic structure consists of a headquarters and a special troops battalion (BSTB). The baseline SB's staff, and functional companies core competences facilitate the command and control of sustainment procedures that support a maneuver

commander's area of operation. In order for the Sustainment Brigade to perform theater opening or distribution operations as required by the Joint Force Commander, the brigade must be tailored with augmented forces capable of performing a specific technical logistics function.<sup>36</sup> The SB lacks the staff expertise, critical functional support capabilities and enabling equipment that allow the brigade to perform various missions. Although the Army has adopted a force structure that can adapt as the missions change, a baseline theater level SB lacks the enablers required for ETO and theater inland distribution operations.

### Conclusion

The assumption that the United States will operate inside a Regional CCDR's Theater of Operation with established reception and distribution capability is false. The U.S. national security outlook for the U.S. is in constant change. The future environment will require the nation to address the challenges of emerging peer competitors, non-state actors, and other disruptive or catastrophic events that require some use of military force. Responding to emerging international and transnational threats requires a constant alignment of new intercontinental partnerships, coalitions, and alliances.<sup>37</sup> The nation's ability to respond in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment requires a defense strategy that maintains a qualitative edge on projecting its military power.

The active pursuit of promoting peace and stability throughout the world is a prerequisite for meeting the NSS goals. U.S. influence abroad has been imposed by U.S. unilateral military action, or U.S. led coalition military presence in locations where the national interests has been challenged. During the past decade, the DoD deployed on average, more than 190,000 service members annually to over-seas contingency

operations in order to achieve its national goals.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, the U.S. Army underwent the largest and most rapid transformation of its forces in the nation's history. The U.S. Army's goal was to transform into a lighter, more lethal force capable of meeting the demands of full spectrum operations.<sup>39</sup> As the military has shown its ability to adapt to the current fight, it is time for the Joint force to shape itself for the next challenge.

Although the Goldwater -Nichols Act of 1986 initiated greater cooperation among the services, organizational and cultural differences have hindered the Joint force from achieving a collective strategy on projecting national military power. The U.S. Army has steadfastly retained its Cold War doctrine, organizational design, and culture. The Army's focus on building Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) along with the reduction or elimination of the enabling logistics forces has inadvertently made them less mobile and more dependent on other Departments to achieve strategic reach. The U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy's platform centric Air-Sea Battle (ASB) strategy has kept the two services strategically aligned. However, ASB fails to incorporate the significance of the land power domain.<sup>40</sup> To operate effectively, the Joint force of tomorrow needs enhanced and integrated capabilities across all operational domains.<sup>41</sup>

The Joint Force must be able to maintain - at a minimum - local or temporary air and maritime superiority over the global commons. It must be able to reach into the operational area with enough capability to conduct virtually any expeditionary operation. Both the MRS-05 and the MCRS-16 documents emphasizes the recommended platforms required for moving the joint force. Neither document acknowledged the requirement for enablers after the Joint Force reaches the port of debarkation. A force that is capable of

transiting to the boundaries of the theater is useless if that same force is incapable of entering into, and operating effectively within the Joint Operations Area. The following are recommendations for a broad approach to formulate promising force projection options for the U.S military.

### Recommendations

The DoD's incessant examination of the ways and means our forces project power continues to address a critical problem. Maintaining its unrivaled global reach will ensure that the U.S. remains a dominant global power. Now and into the future, the requirement to project our national military power will rely more on lifting forces and equipment from the Continental United States and less on forward operating bases. In order to provide the timely movement of deploying forces, the Joint force must close the gaps in command and control, rapid port opening, and force structure that continue to hinder the introduction of forces into a theater of operation.

First, the DOD should acknowledge the tension between USTRANSCOM and the supported regional CCMD. Both CCDRs have explicit responsibilities for the deployment and distribution design. The USTRANSCOM has executive responsibilities to advance the operational approach for deployment operations. USTRANSCOM will provide the strategy air, sea, and port opening capability for the movement to theater. The supported Regional CCMD has to effectively C2 the theater hand off from the strategic movement to the interior lines. Realigning responsibilities between the supported and supporting CCDRs will assist in alleviating the ineffective C2 of Theater opening operations.

First, assign the CCMD's JDDOC to USTRANSCOM. The CCMD with the authority, direction, and control over national mobility forces, lacks sufficient influence

on transportation and mobility operations within the interior theater lines of communication. Aligning the command authority of the JDDOC to USTRANSCOM, will establish a direct link from the regional CCDR command information technology (IT) system connection to the national ITV systems.<sup>42</sup> A consistently trained and resourced JDDOC, with a direct support role to the regional CCDR, will unify the transportation and mobility operations across multiple joint operating environments, theaters of war, or theaters of operation.

Second, the DoD's Global Employment of Forces (GEF) should assign Expeditionary Theater Opening (ETO), port opening responsibilities to the regional CCDR. National level JTF-PO forces are currently assigned under USTRANSCOM; they are CONUS based. As we reduce our overseas presence, there will be increased demand the nation's strategic mobility assets. Placing JTF-PO forces in the TPFDD ahead of combat forces is a waste of strategic lift capacity and of precious time. The majority of military operations over the last decade have been short to no-notice crisis actions. The regional CCDR is better placed to respond to the multiple demands of ETO. With assigned intra-theater assets, a regional CCDR could respond to a regional crisis inside the theater within hours — not days — of notification.

Finally, a Theater Opening Element should be aligned with each OCONUS ASCC senior logistics headquarters to provide the technical competencies required to plan, and facilitate theater opening. This analysis of theater reception and inland distribution operations found a mismatch of CCDR and ASCC doctrinal responsibilities versus assigned force capabilities as supported commands. The supported CCDR responsible for JRSOI activities requires the operational and logistics enablers to

support the force movement.<sup>43</sup> The ASCC has DoD executive responsibility to lead JRSOI, and inland surface distribution. The U.S. Army's TSC is the executing headquarters for the logistics support of sustainment and distribution operations in the JOA. The U.S. Army should reengage itself as a deployment / redeployment force multiplier. Current U.S. Army logistics force designs have changed over time to become more modular, and less mission-specific. The current U.S. Army TSC and ESC have logistics support requirements to facilitate JRSOI and Theater Opening operations. Present organizational design of the TSC and ESC requires augmentation from other U.S. Army elements in order to provide that capability.<sup>44</sup>

The U.S. competitive advantage over all other international powers has been grounded in part from our military's ability to project and sustain its forces globally. As the DoD reduces its presence in Afghanistan, and rebalances forces to other parts of the world, the military must strengthen its expeditionary capability. To achieve this, the Joint force must keep its promise to our regional CCDR's and civil leaders to provide a rapidly deployable force capable of protecting the nation's security and interests.

## Endnotes

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